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Workman to get \$660,000 for broken leg

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dtepf@ctpost.com BRIDGEPORT -- A Newtown construction company was ordered Tuesday to pay more than \$600,000 to a city house framer for injuries he suffered when he fell into a hole on a construction site more than five years ago.

Litigation Arbitrator Thomas Barrett ordered Terhaar Builders to pay Ward Schlemmer \$660,000 and another \$45,000 to Schlemmer's wife, Diane, for the emotional toll her husband's injuries took on her.

He was represented by Bridgeport lawyer Harold **Rosnick**.

Both sides had agreed to private arbitration after settlement negotiations broke down.

Larry Terhaar, the owner of the construction company, said he was unaware of the award and had no comment on it.

According to **Rosnick**, on July 24, 1996, the 47-year-old Schlemmer was hired by Terhaar to frame a house on Pheasant Ridge Road in Newtown.

"He was anxious to please the general contractor by promptly framing the house in a workmanlike manner," **Rosnick** said.

He continued that a Bethel lumber company had delivered the lumber for the house and at Terhaar's direction left the 7-foot stack of wood within three feet of the nine-foot deep foundation hole.

He said his client was pulling wood from the huge bundle when it began to collapse, causing him to fall into the foundation hole.

"He severely broke his left leg with the bone protruding through the skin similar to the injury suffered by Burt Reynolds in the movie *Deliverance*," **Rosnick** explained.

As a result of his injury Schlemmer spent nearly four weeks in Danbury Hospital and after his release was bedridden for more than three months, **Rosnick** said. He has undergone numerous operations as doctors worked to save his leg. **Rosnick** claimed his client's injuries have resulted in his left leg being five inches shorter than his right and he has a 50 percent permanent impairment of his lower left leg.

Rosnick said Schlemmer, who is married and has a 9-year-old son, can no longer work in the construction business because of his injury.

"Each and every day Ward is reminded of the horrible and debilitating injuries he sustained. Each time he stands, or walks or stretches he is faced with the reality that he will never have better than 50 percent of the use of his left

leg," he added.

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